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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
27 October 1954

TO: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

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SUBJECT: Impending Cuban Elections

1. Date: 1 November 1954.
2. Offices to be filled: President, vice president; all federal senators (54) and federal representatives (130); governors of the six provinces; all mayors (126) and municipal aldermen (2214).
3. Parties participating: Progressive Action, Liberal, Radical Union, Democratic which comprise the National Progressive Coalition supporting Batista; Cuban Revolutionary Party (Authentic); Cuban People's Party (Orthodox).
4. Key political figures: Fulgencio BATISTA y Zaldivar, Ramon GRAU San Martin.
5. Principal issue: The Batista regime, which came into power through a military coup in March 1952, is seeking a legal mandate from the Cuban people to install it as the duly elected government of Cuba for a new four year term. The regime has replaced with a comparatively honest and orderly government the former Prio government which was characterized by excessive graft and corruption, unpunished political gangsterism, repeated labor strikes and conspiratorial activities against other Caribbean governments. However the Batista regime is a military dictatorship; is unpopular with the people; remains dependent on the continued loyalty of the armed forces; and continues to have an uneasy alliance with organized labor. The Cuban electorate, more apathetic than disaffected, resents most the fact that Batista interrupted the "constitutional rythmn" of their government by his coup.

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~~SECRET~~6. Present party strength:

Figures released by the Superior Electoral Tribunal purporting to be final statistics of political party affiliations during the 14-28 February 1954 affiliation period are as follows:

Progressive Action Party	916,279	48.4 percent
Liberal Party	274,552	14.5 "
Radical Union Party	242,742	12.8 "
Democratic Party	230,090	12.2 "
Government Coalition	1,663,663	87.9 percent
Cuban Revolutionary Party (Authentic)	194,297	10.3 percent
Cuban People's Party (Orthodox)	21,087	1.1 "
Opposition	215,384	11.4 percent
One provincial party in Oriente and two municipal parties in Havana and Marianao	12,480	.7 percent

These should not be accepted as accurately representing party voting strength. It has been customary in Cuba for pressure to be brought to bear on voters to affiliate with one or another political party, particularly with regard to parties supporting the government in power.

7. Principal factors influencing the outcome: Numerous factors favor Batista's election. Batista has built a flexible coalition of four parties which, ranging widely in orientation, broaden his electoral base. Parties of the opposition, torn from within by dissident factions, remain largely ineffective politically. The electoral code established by the government requires "straight ticket" voting--each vote cast for a coalition candidate is a pro-Batista vote. Batista has made significant moves to increase his growing popularity: repeal of onerous public order laws, amnesty for many political prisoners, an expanding public works program and certain concessions to labor.

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Grau of the Authentic party, sole opposition presidential candidate, appears not to be in the campaign seriously and to regard his chances of victory as slim.

The possibility exists that a revolutionary outbreak by opposition elements either before or during 1 November may preclude the elections.

The government

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is prepared to suppress any disturbances and to thwart any revolutionary action. Batista, who still has the loyalty and support of the armed forces, has arranged for the close surveillance of all strategic points during the electoral period but sporadic outbreaks of violence remain a distinct possibility.

8. Outcome of other relevant recent elections: Batista's control of the Cuban government since 1934 has been interrupted only by two Authentic party administrations (1944-1948; 1948-1952) the second of which was terminated before the expiration of its period by the 10 March 1952 coup through which Batista returned to power.
9. Informed opinions: Batista is generally considered likely to win. A widespread belief exists that he will attempt to retain control beyond November at first through honest elections and, if this proves impossible, through other means, including the use of the military, if it becomes necessary.
10. Probable significance for US security interests: The Batista regime can be expected to continue to maintain close cordial relations with the United States and a firm pro-Western anti-Communist stand.

Batista's election will insure continuation of Cuba's friendly relations with other Caribbean countries and so promote peace in that area.

However an election of this nature, in which opposition elements did not play an effective electoral role, would not represent a popular choice and would not contribute to the political stability of the country.

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